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FARM BUSINESS FACTS

U.S. Department of Agriculture

Conversation between Wallace Kadderly, USDA Radio Service, and Marvin M. Sandstrom, Agricultural Marketing Service over NBC on the National Farm and Home Hour, Friday, July 28, 1939.

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KADDERLY:

From the Agricultural Marketing Service we have two reports today--the Department's 1939 lamb crop estimate, and some information on truck crops. Our reporter is Marvin M. Sandstrom. Sandy, how has the 1939 lamb crop turned out?

SANDSTROM:

A little smaller -- only about 1 percent smaller -- than the lamb crop produced last year. And last year's lamb crop was the largest of record. So, this year's crop of around 32 million head is still a big one -- about 8 percent larger than the 10-year average, and 5 percent larger than the most recent 5-year average.

KADDERLY:

1939 lamb crop somewhat smaller than that produced last year, but larger than usual.

SANDSTROM:

Right. The total crop is smaller this year only because of fewer lambs in the Western Sheep States, especially in Texas. In the Native Sheep States -- that is through the Corn Belt and the Eastern Area -- a few more lambs were produced this year than last. One of the reasons, of course, was a greater number of breeding ewes on farms in these States on the first of January 1939 than ever before -- and 2 percent more than at the beginning of 1938. There also were more ewes in the Western Sheep States this year.

KADDERLY:

The loss of lambs must have been heavier this year.

SANDSTROM:

You're right again, Wallace. The average number of lambs saved from each 100 ewes was smaller this year for the country as a whole. In the Native Sheep States, the larger number of ewes more than offset the smaller production from each 100 ewes. This was not true in the Western States. Texas had an extremely poor year for lambs, and the percentage of lambs saved in that State was down sharply. The percentage of lambs saved in the other western states was better than last year, except in Wyoming, Oregon and Montana.

KADDERLY:

What effect did the short pasture in much of the Western area have on the lamb crop this year?

SANDSTROM:

Let me answer that this way. Weather conditions in Texas both last year and this, cut down the number of breeding ewes and also reduced the lamb crop. Weather conditions in the Western Sheep States as a whole were generally favorable during the 1939 lambing season. However, following the lambing season, feed conditions in a number of the States were rather poor. This did not affect the production but it did retard the development of lambs. Early lambs from many areas have been of poorer

quality than last year. It is now rather probable that the late lambs will be of lighter weights than lambs marketed from the West last season. These late lambs are expected to run more to what we call "feeder condition" than last year.

KADDERLY:

Thanks for this report on the lamb crop. Now, what about that information on truck crops?

SANDSTROM:

Many parts of the country report rather unfavorable truck crop weather during the past month. In most of the eastern areas, lack of rain at various times during the entire planting and growing season has cut down yields on the earlier crops -- and also has lowered production prospects for the later vegetables. If we swing westward we find in most of the North Central producing areas that July has been generally favorable for the truck crops. In southern Missouri and Arkansas, a hot dry July checked the growth of vegetables.

In Texas, also, conditions have been rather unfavorable for the late cantaloup and watermelon crops. In the Far West, New Mexico cantaloup growers have had good weather. And in Washington, Oregon, and California, the month of July is reported as favorable for commercial vegetables. That's about all on truck crops now, Wallace, but I want to say something about cotton.

KADDERLY:

Go right ahead!

SANDSTROM:

Folks have been asking for figures on this year's yield and production of cotton. Well, The first official figures will be issued August 8th. That's a week from next Tuesday. However, the Department's July cotton report indicated that this year's cotton crop will be harvested from just about the same acreage as the rather conservative plantings under cultivation on July first last year. For the first report on yield prospects and the probable size of this year's cotton crop, we'll have to wait for the August eighth report.

KADDERLY:

(Ad lib close).

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